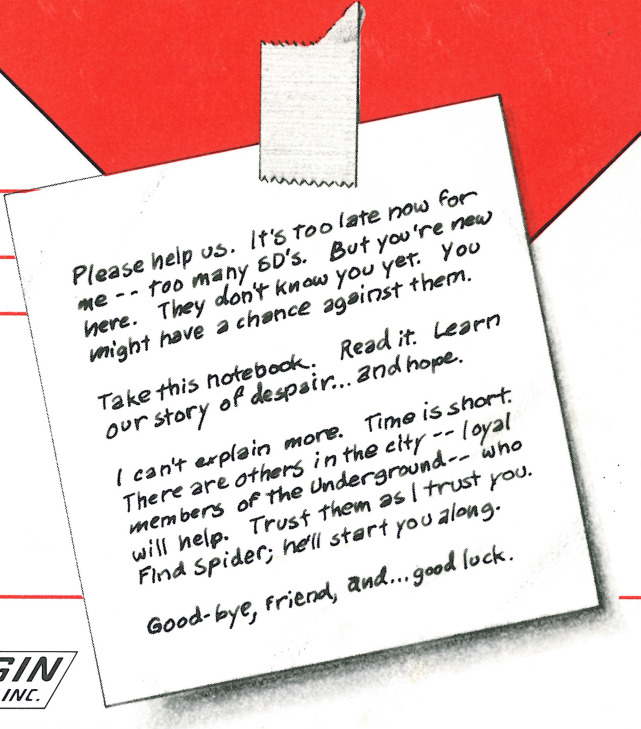
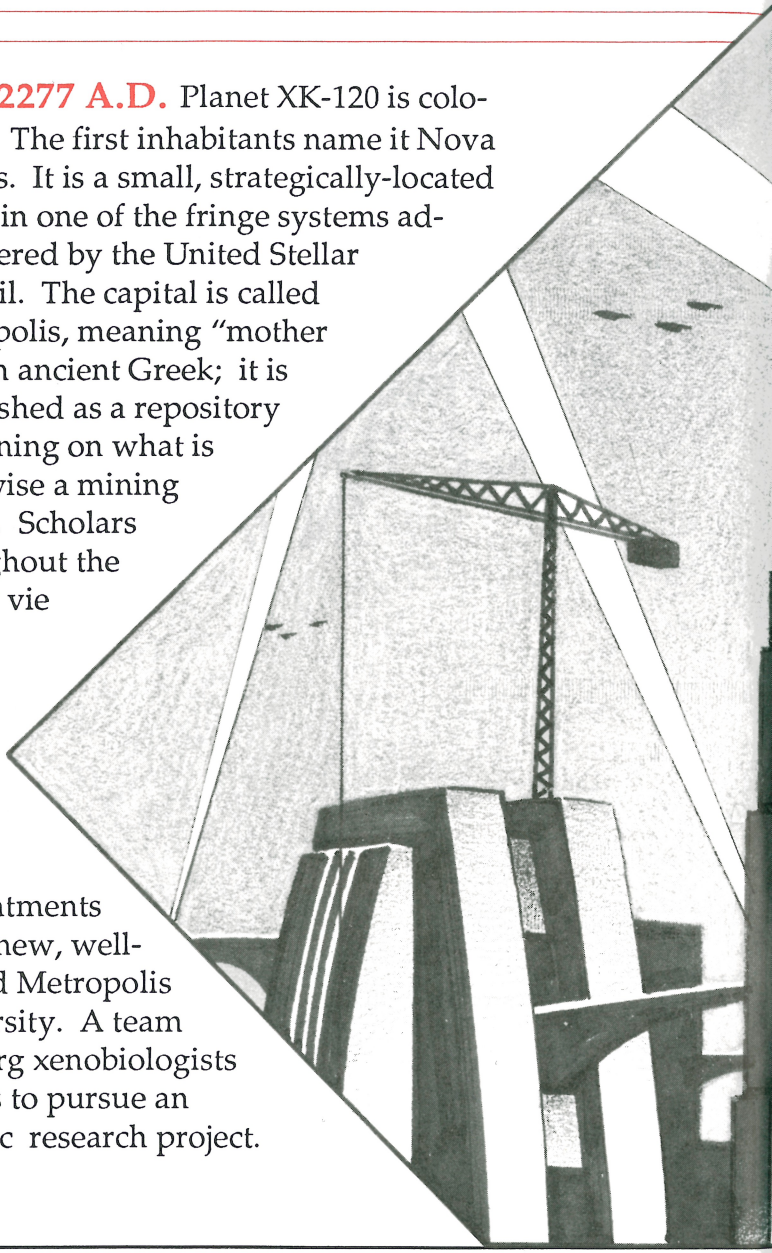
Notes From The Underground



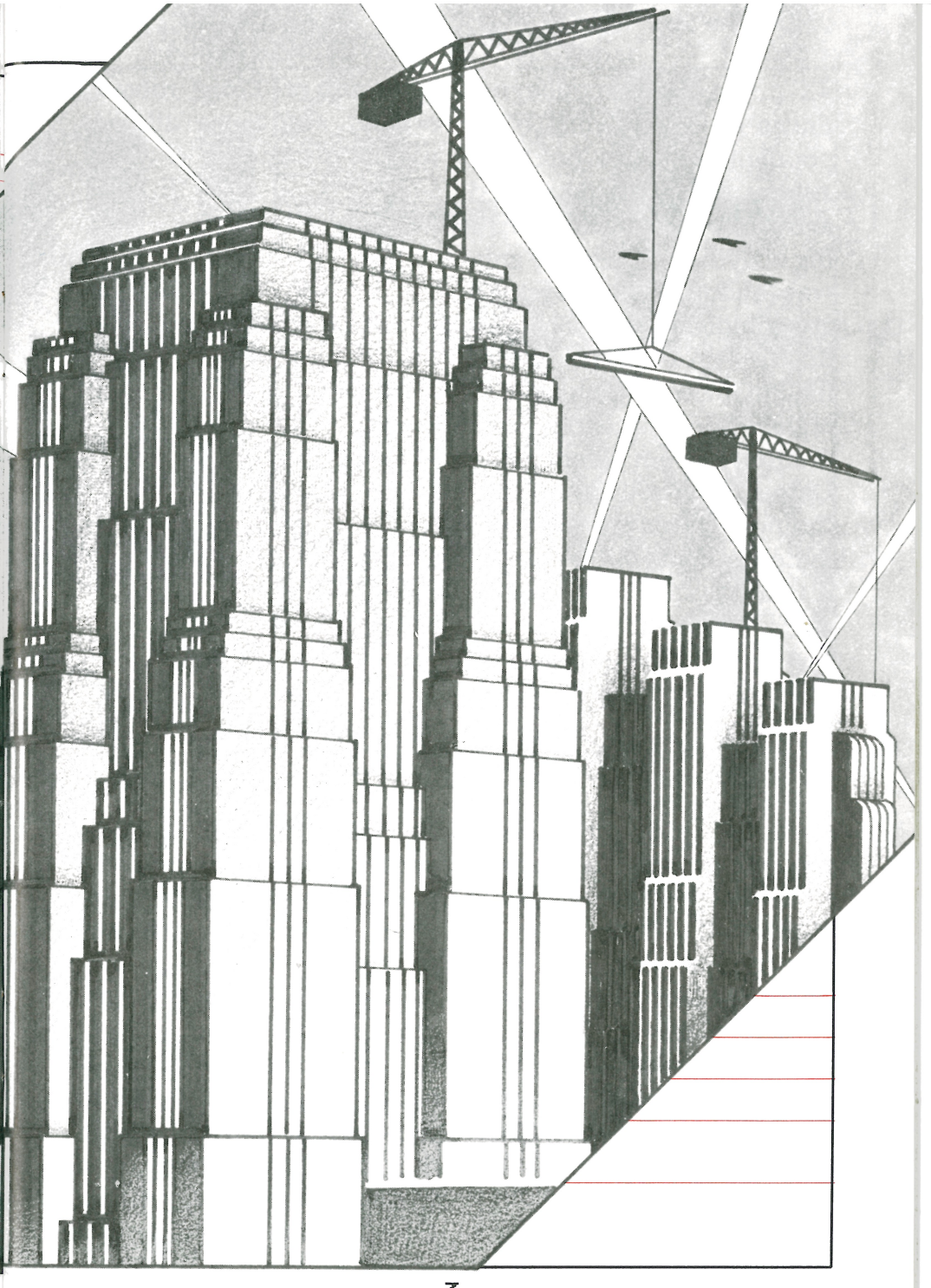
ORIGIN SYSTEMS INC.

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE TZORG INVASION

2213-2277 A.D. Planet XK-120 is colonized. The first inhabitants name it Nova Athens. It is a small, strategically-located world in one of the fringe systems administered by the United Stellar Council. The capital is called Metropolis, meaning "mother city" in ancient Greek; it is established as a repository of learning on what is otherwise a mining planet. Scholars throughout the galaxy vie for



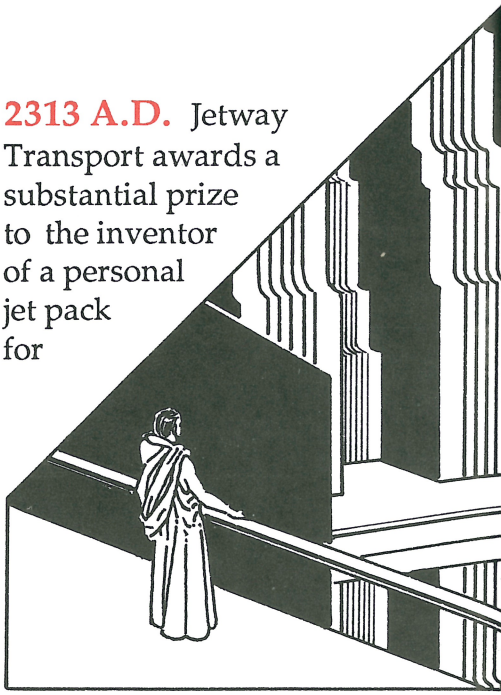
appointments to the new, well-funded Metropolis University. A team of Tzorg xenobiologists arrives to pursue an esoteric research project.



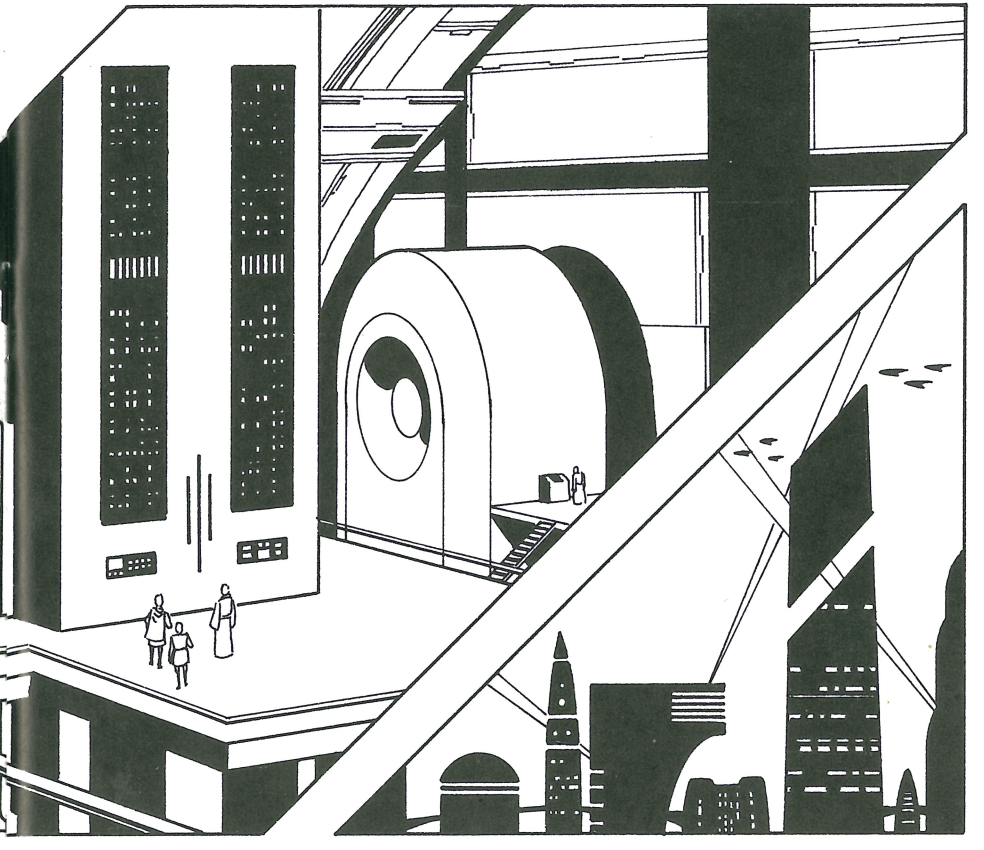
2278 A.D. Metropolis continues to grow, while other population centers on Nova Athens remain undeveloped and devoted primarily to mining activities. Extensive subway and slidewalk systems are completed. Megatech Industries provides many jobs for the increasing number of highly-trained scientists who graduate from Metropolis University. The United Stellar Council awards top-secret defense contracts in the field of plasma physics to Megatech. A Tzorg engineer heads Megatech's design group.

2291 A.D. A botanical garden is opened in the northeastern section of the city. Many rare varieties of flowers are cultivated along the winding footpaths. Construction begins on the Bellevue Apartments which will offer residents the latest high-tech servomechanical conveniences and will overlook a lush park. The university library catalogs an additional two million infodisks, making its holdings second to none in the galaxy. A group of Tzorg robotics experts automates all city utilities plants.

2313 A.D. Jetway Transport awards a substantial prize to the inventor of a personal jet pack for



everyday use. Neurosurgeons at Metropolis Hospital gain galaxy-wide acclaim for their spectacular achievements in synapse repair. Centennial exhibitions, concerts, and galas attract an endless stream of Nova Athens inhabitants as well as offworld visitors. A young entrepreneur scores a marketing coup by establishing a chain of franchised "Burger Barn" restau-



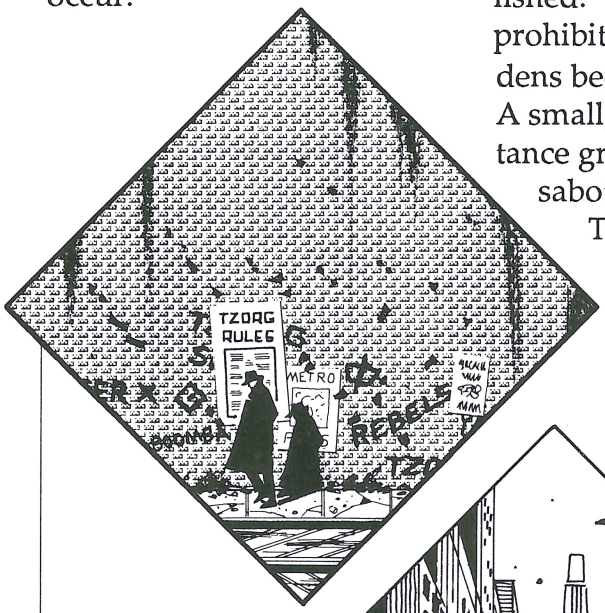
rants throughout the city. The Tzorg Ambassador and diplomatic staff are suddenly and inexplicably recalled. Soon thereafter, Tzorg attacks commence against outlying planets.

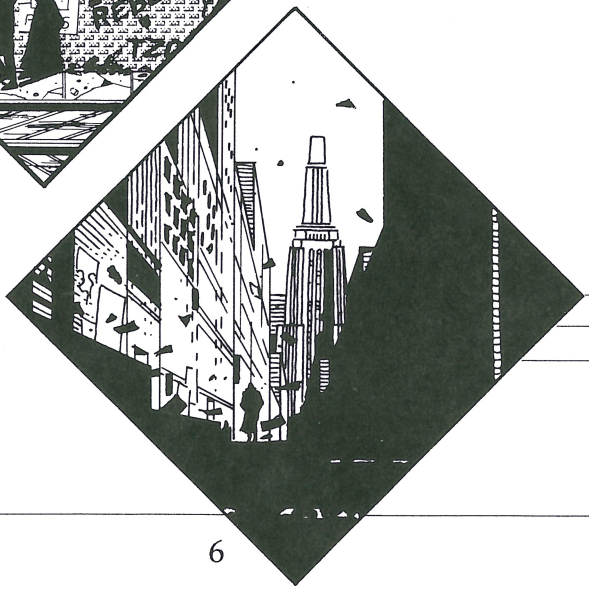
2324 A.D. A technician at a Metropolis electronics firm develops a micro-miniature energy generator. Hyperjazz fans line the street for days to catch a glimpse of celebrity Dyna DeRange during her promotional stopover at Bizarro Music. A long-anticipated summit meeting between representatives of the United Stellar Council and the Tzorg Empire is held in Metropolis. The talks end in a stalemate.

2332 A.D. Remote mining settlements and defense outposts on Nova Athens are subjected to unremitting Tzorg assaults. Casualties flow into Metropolis Hospital. University classes are boycotted to protest a military draft instituted by the United Stellar Council. Shortages of some consumer products occur.

Megatech scientists race to complete work on numerous defense projects.

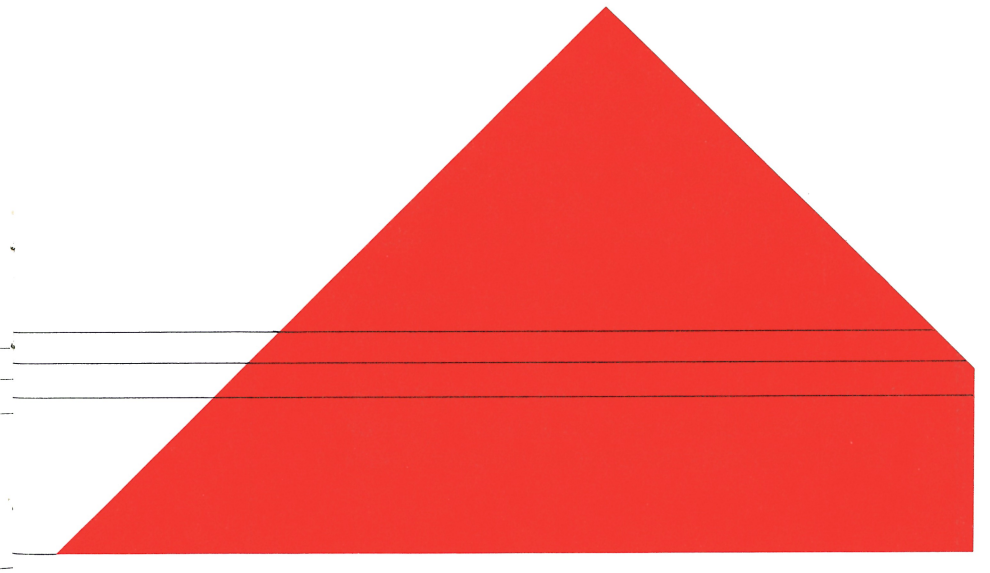
2335A.D. In a series of lightning strikes, Tzorg troops conquer Nova Athens and institute marshal law in Metropolis. Public Tracking and Registration Offices are established. Scientific research is prohibited. The Botanic Gardens become the City Dump. A small, disorganized, resistance group begins efforts to sabotage the newly-built Tzorg Authority Complex.

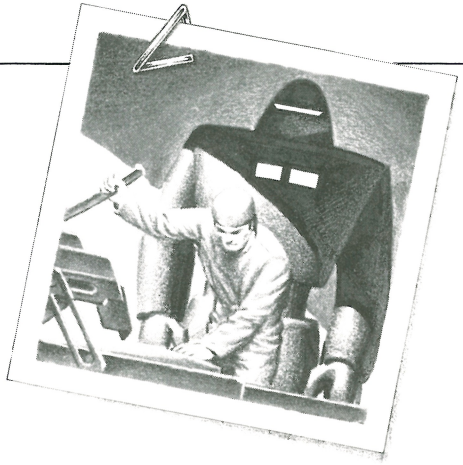




2346-2399 A.D. Mounting pressure in other sectors of the galaxy forces the Tzorgs to install the Robot Patrol System in Metropolis and leave the planet. City services are distrupted, and luxury apartments fall into disrepair. University enrollment dwindles. Repeat offenders and black marketeers sometimes find haven in the dank and twisting steam tunnels beneath the city. The Underground network and its information files grow.

2400 A.D. The Tzorg War continues to rage. Galaxy-wide military offensives againt the Tzorgs by the United Stellar Council cause trade lane blockades. Rationing of food commences throughout Nova Athens. Sporadic, though increasingly organized resistance to the Tzorg Robots in Metropolis results in the imposition of indefinite jail sentences for inhabitants with five or more Social Demerits. As more Metropolis residents are jailed or disappear, workers from other Tzorg-held territories are imported to replace them. The frequency of contraband checks increases. A member of the Underground discovers a secret route into the Tzorg Authority Complex.





JOURNAL OF A REBEL 2400 A.D.

14th Epsilon

They got M. today. She didn't see them coming. I did.

We'd made it to the third floor of the Rehab Center. I was watching the transporter tube while M. worked on a locked door. She was always the one for the direct approach. But then, that makes sense: M. headed our munitions committee.

Rumor had it that there was a cache of detonators somewhere in the building. Could've been a false lead planted by a collaborator, but M. was willing to take the chance. I guess she was too eager, and didn't notice how easily the door opened.

The Lookers were on her before she could draw her blaster. All I could do was watch...and then run.

It's been a long time since I've written in this journal. Since I met M. This is a cold substitute for a caring friend.

19th Epsilon

T. was talking about Sam Claymore tonight. It was T.'s regular speech to new recruits at the University, but somehow he got sidetracked when one of the kids asked about "heroes."

There aren't many of us left who'd met Sam. But just about everyone in the UG has heard his name. Sam Claymore, also known as: The Technician.

I was about ten when I first saw him. A big guy, tall and muscular. Yet he had these long, graceful fingers that were always fiddling with some gadget or other. He was real good with weapons, and explosives were his personal speciality. He must have taken a hundred Cyborgs with him that last day.

Something had gone wrong with the timing mechanism. It looked like sabotage, but Sam wouldn't point a finger

at anyone. They say he smiled a funny sort of smile, grabbed the bomb, and jumped on the tube to the next level. He was far enough away then so his comrades weren't hurt by the explosion. No one ever saw him again.

27th Epsilon

Got my fourth SD today. Maybe I'm getting careless...or soft. Either way, it was a stupid mistake.

The broadcasts were driving me crazy. They've stepped up the frequency and the volume. Sometimes it's hard to hear yourself think. Nothing much was planned for today, so I decided to hunt up D. at the Novue. He's always good for a laugh.

I didn't have an EZ ZAC, and didn't bother to get one. So, I had to do some fancy footwork at the border. I was sneaking through that shred of greenery to the southwest of the apartments when I caught a glimpse of something yellow. I stopped to take a closer look. There, at the base of the wall – somehow, unbelievably – was a tiny golden flower.

I knew it was a flower because one of the older folks, a graffiti artist in the UG, sometimes draws them from memory. But this was much more beautiful, more precious than any sketch I'd seen. It was

small and scruffy, so maybe it was a weed. That didn't matter...I had to stare. Of course, that's when the Checker spotted me.

I went back later tonight – ZAC in hand – but I couldn't find the flower. Maybe the robot crushed it. Maybe someone picked it. Or maybe I'd just imagined it was there after all.

3rd Zeta

The tunnel into the Rehab Center is almost finished. There's still the problem of all the locked doors...not to mention the guards. But at least there will be one secret route in. And out.

J. says he has to add M. to the list of "disappeared ones." He can't put it off any longer. It was hard to hear that. Sounds like a pronouncement that we've given up hope. But if she's been released, no one's seen her.

At least she's not one of those half-mad detainees who are dumped into the streets every so often. Repeated stunning takes its toll. I don't want to think about that happening to M.

J. asked me to take over the munitions committee. M. would chuckle if she

knew. She always called me "hotshot." Always called me.... Now I'm talking as if she's gone forever. And the doors she opened inside me are closing, locking.

11th Zeta

Freedom. It's a word we don't hear very often. A word that many of us have forgotten...and some of us want to forget. But whether or not we remember just exactly what it is we're fighting for, we're all driven to fight until we're free again.

W. told me he's an arms dealer because the money's good. He said we'll never get rid of the stinking robots, so he might as well sell on the black market, and keep a few credits for himself.

Maybe so. But there was something in his eyes that betrayed him when I bought that new laser today. Something that said more than his usual, "Don't shoot your foot off, pal." It was a sparkle... almost a wink.

Before I turned to go, I grinned at him and said, "I'll fry a few of 'em for you. Count on it."

28th Zeta

Another shipment of workers arrived from the mining settlements. Most of them have experience running heavy machinery, so they'll be assigned to the crews repairing the collapsed sections in the SZ. But rumor has it that there is at least one computer specialist from off-world in the group. This could be the break we need...the one we've been waiting for.

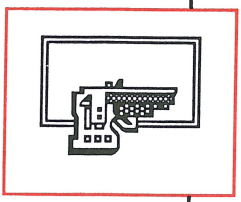
With what the UG knows, and what's been collected in the Note-book, someone who can handle the terminals could get into the Authority Complex and reach the main console... if it exists...and deactivate the robots.

I tell myself not to hope. Just keep going day after day, fighting, running, hiding. But hope is there, growing inside me like that stubborn little flower.

And I tell M.: Hang on, you've got to hang on. We've got a chance.

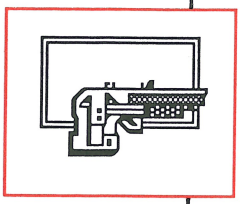
WEAPONS

Here are brief descriptions of the weapons available to you from the various blackmarket vendors associated with us. Some of the weapons require energy to operate. You can get this energy by purchasing energy cells, or you can use the Tzorg power nodes to charge your weapons. However, be warned that it is illegal to use the power nodes.



HAND PHASER

A basic hand weapon that emits a short, narrow, weak charge of energy. Requires some skill to use. Relatively sturdy.

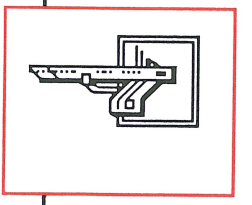


HAND BLASTER

Similar to the hand phaser, but supplies a wider burst, making it easier to use effectively.

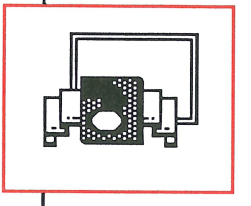
STUN GUN

This weapon will stun a robot for 5 ticks, preventing it from moving or returning fire. Handy in a pinch.



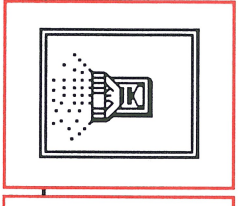
DISRUPTER

When activated, the disrupter causes robots in its immediate vicinity to lose energy until they are immobile. They can then be searched for credits.



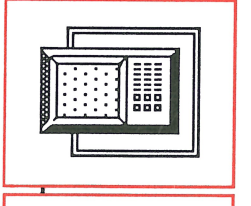
HOLOPROJECTOR

When activated, projects the user's image in order to confuse robots.



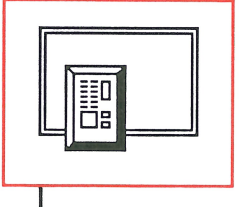
VIDEO SCRAMBLER

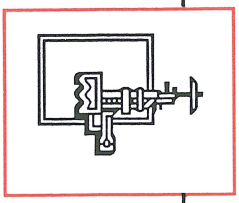
Blinds robots that rely on visual targeting.



DIRECTIVE OVERRIDE

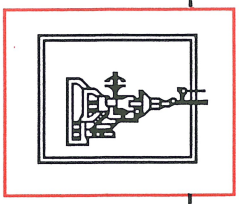
This device causes a robot to attack other robots and follow the user. Watch out for crossfire.





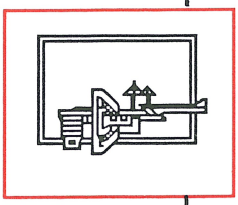
MINI CUTTER

A medium-duty weapon emitting a narrow beam of moderate intensity and medium duration. Difficult to use and fragile, but more desirable than phasers or blasters.



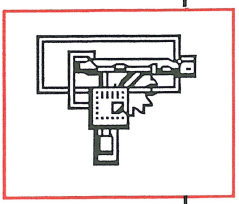
LASER CUTTER

A very fragile weapon that is easy to use due to its long-duration beam. Moderate strength.



BLASTER RIFLE

Delivers a short burst of energy, so it's difficult to use. However, this weapon offers very ample power once a hit is made.

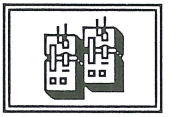


PULSE LASER

A very powerful laser rifle that requires a high degree of skill to use. It emits a narrow beam of short duration, and is quite fragile.

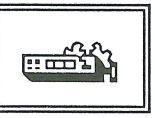
TIME BOMB

When set, will explode after the time designated. Range is 3 tiles. If the delay is set to 0, a Detonator must be used.



DETONATOR

Used to detonate time bombs on command, rather than detonate after a programmed delay

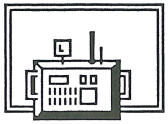


NOTE:

Other weapons may be available, though difficult to locate.

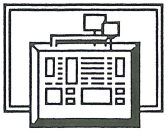
ENERGY SHIELDS

You will eventually want to purchase some type of energy shield. They will take the bite off any hits that you take from the Tzorg weaponry.



LIGHT ENERGY SHIELD

Basic armor, giving some protection against robot attacks.



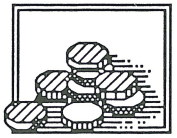
HEAVY ENERGY SHIELD

More substantial protection against attacks.

NOTE: Other devices may be available, though hard to find.

OTHER ITEMS

Other items are available which you may find of use. Here is a brief description of them.

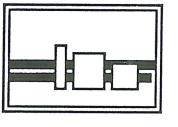


CREDITS

Medium of exchange in Metropolis. You earn credits by disabling robots and searching them for their energy sources. While you cannot

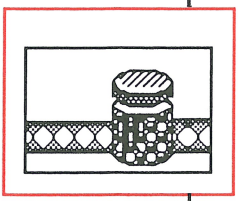
use these energy sources to power your own equipment, they are in great demand and are readily accepted by merchants for trade. When you collect energy sources off disabled robots, you will be informed of the credit equivalent that you have aquired. Note that it is best to disable robots as soon as possible after they have recharged at a power node because you will receive the most credits at that time.

ENERGY CELLS

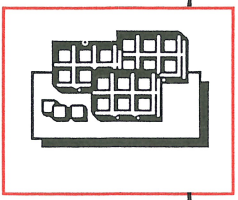


Many items, like weapons and scanners, are powered by internal energy units. You can recharge these units by finding or purchasing energy cells. Alternately, you can recharge energy units at the Tzorg power nodes. Note that using the

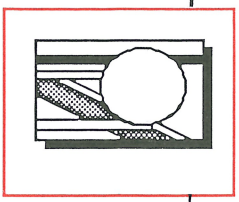
power nodes is illegal and will trigger all attack robots in the vicinity.



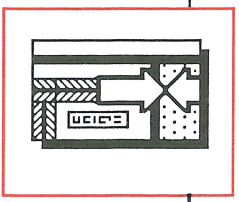
BOOSTER PILLS
Provide temporary large boosts in energy, agility, and intelligence. While great in a pinch, these pills take their toll by reducing the maximum levels of energy, agility and intelligence you can achieve after a full rest.



PLASTIFORM
Used to heal any wounds sustained in combat and to recover from general fatigue.



PASSCARD
A Coded device that opens locked doors.

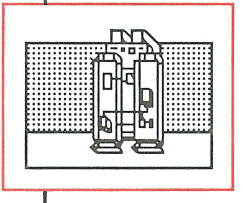


ZONE AUTHORIZATION CARD (ZAC)
Permits travel within a designated section of the city until a specified expiration date. Travel is

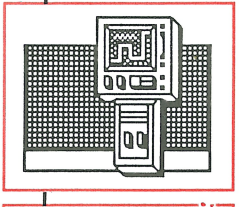
otherwise restricted by the robots to the Central Zone.

SUBWAY TOKEN
Required to ride a subway train.

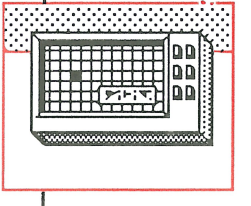
JET PACK
For those too tired to take the slidewalks. Start walking again to deactivate the pack.



SCANNER
Provides a long-range view of the immediate area.



GRID READOUT
Specifies user's position in the city location grid.



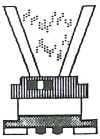
NOTE:
Other items are currently undocumented, although their existence is rumored.

ROBOTS

Some robots, like the Viewer robots, will pursue and attack a human on sight. Other robots are alerted by stimuli such as the sound of a weapon firing in their area. You will need to understand the distinction between the various robots, including how easily they are overcome and how powerful their attack mechanisms are.

CLASS 1 ROBOTS:

These robots are the easiest to damage and require the least damage before failing. They have the weakest weapon systems and will carry low to moderate levels of energy.

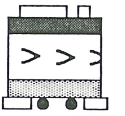


Police

Police

A Police robot will randomly check citizens for contraband. If you submit to a check while carrying contraband, it will be confiscated. If you refuse to submit, the police robot will sound an alert. The Police robot will not attack unprovoked-- it is programed to alert other robots.

Sentry


Sentry

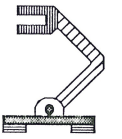
A Sentry robot will stand guard in one place until alerted, at which time it will pursue for a short distance and attack its alert target.

Checker

Checker

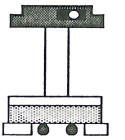
A Checker robot will check citizens for ZACs. If you do not have an appropriate ZAC, the Checker robot will return you to the Central Zone and issue you a social demerit. If you have over 4 demerits the Checker robot will sound an alert. Like the Police robot, the Checker will not attack unprovoked — it is programmed to alert other robots.

Mech


Mech

Mechanical manipulator robots maintain the automation systems in Metropolis. They will relay any alerts they intercept.

Patroller

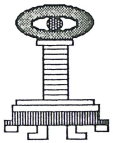

Patroller

Patroller robots pursue and attack the objects of nearby alerts.

CLASS 2 ROBOTS:

These robots are difficult to damage and can sustain moderate to

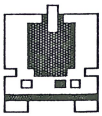
large amounts of damage before failing. They have moderately powerful weapon systems and carry varied levels of energy.



Follower

Follower

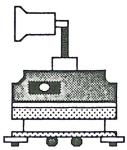
Follower robots trail suspected members of the underground or black market. When alerted, a Follower Robot will pursue and attack.



Guard

Guard

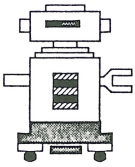
Guard robots pursue and attack when alerted.



Hunter

Hunter

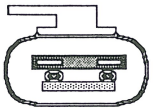
Hunter robots act as stationary guards. When they detect movement, they will search for the source of movement for a few ticks. Hunter robots will attack any humans they see.



Seeker

Seeker

Seeker robots are stationary guards. They will pursue and attack any humans they see.



Looker

Looker

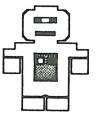
Patrol robots that pursue and attack any humans they see.

CLASS 3 ROBOTS:

These robots are very difficult to damage and can sustain large to very large amounts of damage before failing. They have very powerful weapon systems and usually carry moderate levels of energy.

Miniborg

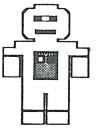
These are stationary guards that pursue and attack any object of an alert.



Miniborg

Cyborg

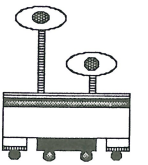
Cyborg robots patrol sensitive areas. They pursue and attack any human they see.



Cyborg

Viewer

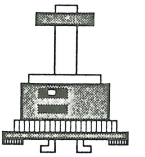
Viewer robots patrol sensitive areas. They pursue and attack any human they see.



Viewer

Scanner

Scanner robots patrol sensitive areas. They pursue and attack any human they see.



Scanner

CLASS 4 ROBOTS:

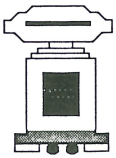
These robots are the most difficult to damage and can sustain the

largest amounts of damage before failing. They have the most powerful weapon systems of any of the robots and carry high levels of energy

Tank

Tank

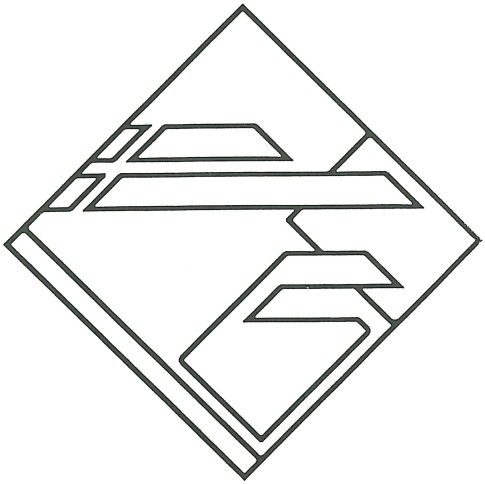
Tank robots are stationary guards which will attack any human that they see or detect moving. They will not pursue, however.



Protector

Protector

Protector robots are stationary guards in sensitive areas. They attack and pursue any human they see or detect moving.



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Acknowledgements
To Those Who Helped Make 2400 A.D. a Reality

Designed and Programmed by
Chuck Bueche

Produced by
Dallas Snell

Documentation and Packaging by
Lori Ogwulu
Doug Wike
Dennis Loubet
Cindy Boucher

Manual by
Patricia Fitzgibbons

Quality Assurance by
Jean Tauscher
Kurtstable
Ian Manchester
Kirk Hutcheon
Jim Spillane
Dale Nichols
Tim Beaudoin

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to Dallas Snell and Richard Garriott for their invaluable conceptual, editorial and programming assistance. I would also like to thank all the others at Origin Systems whose consideration and suggestions helped make this product possible.

Chuck Bueche